

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Professional development is an essential part of effective organizations. Successful organizations are those in which continuous learning and improvement take place. In successful schools, principals and teachers engage in continuous learning and improvement in order to enhance the learning of their students. The challenge to policymakers and educators is to create conditions conducive to student and educator learning in each school.

In Tennessee, the *Education Improvement Act* (1992) provides the framework for innovation by emphasizing educational outcomes and providing flexibility in the use of resources at the local school level. That legislation and the proposed *Education Reform Act* (2002), the annual *Master Plan* of the State Board of Education, and the *Tennessee Standards for Teaching: A Guide for Mentoring* (2001) envision an educational climate in which schools are responsible for ensuring that all students learn.

This policy updates the *Professional Development Policy*, first adopted by the Board in 1992. The policy explicitly endorses the standards developed by the National Staff Development Council (Revised, 2001). The standards focus attention on the systemic nature of staff development and apply to the school, school system and state as these entities provide professional development for all educators responsible for the learning of students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The policy is also consistent with the requirements of federal legislation supporting high quality professional development (see Appendix A).

While the role of the state in providing professional development activities will continue to be important, a new role for the state will be to enhance the capacity of each school and system to take responsibility for the professional development of its own personnel. The state can promote professional development in each school by identifying research based practices, providing data in a usable format to educators, and ensuring that individual school improvement plans are consistent with this policy. Professional development is the keystone, the central supporting element, needed to accomplish the ambitious student learning goals in state and federal legislation and the *Master Plan*.

Professional Development Standards

Educators need to update their knowledge and skills continually throughout their careers. Professional development standards are necessary because for too long professional development practices have not led to improved educator knowledge and student learning. The new standards draw on the growing knowledge base regarding effective professional development, leading to continuous improvement in student learning.

Schools currently are developing school improvement plans that include professional development plans; it is important for these plans to be consistent with effective practice and reflect needs identified in school data. Effective

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professional development programs share certain characteristics that should be embodied in the plans of schools and school systems.

- Faculty and staff determine goals for improvement of their school based on assessment of current performance and share in decisions about what will be learned.
- Faculty and staff have time to work together to study new content, plan lessons, critique student work and reflect on their practice.
- Professional development provides teachers and administrators opportunities to pursue personal intellectual development and takes into consideration the career stage of the educator.
- Both teachers and administrators assume responsibility for their own growth and professional development.

Teachers and administrators need access to new knowledge about effective practices in several important areas. The following examples are illustrative.

- Educators need to regularly update their content knowledge aligned with new student standards.
- Educators opportunities to learn about research regarding teaching increasingly diverse students.
- Educators need opportunities to explore the use of technology to enhance learning.
- Educators need assistance in the use of authentic assessment and data from standardized tests to inform classroom practice.
- New teachers need the support of mentors during the first challenging year of teaching.
- Administrators need opportunities to learn how to use data and research and to improve the instructional program and school climate in order to improve student learning.

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards forge a tight link between educator knowledge and student results. Each standard begins with the phrase, “Staff development that improves the learning of all students....” The standards apply to development of everyone who affects student learning—from board of education member to classified support staff. The standards are organized into three divisions: context, process, and content.

According to NSDC, context standards address where learning occurs—the organization, system, or culture—and the organization’s responsibilities to ensure results for both adults and students. Process standards address how a system can organize learning opportunities to ensure that adults acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions to affect student learning. Content standards address what educations must understand and be able to apply to ensure that students learn successfully.

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The State Board of Education endorses the following National Staff Development Standards as applied to the development of educators at all levels.

NSDC Standards for Staff Development (Revised) 2001

Context Standards

Learning Communities: Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.

Leadership: Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.

Resources: Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

Process Standards

Data-Driven: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

Evaluation: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

Research-Based: Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision making.

Design: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

Learning: Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.

Collaboration: Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

Content Standards

Equity: Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for students' academic achievement.

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Quality Teaching: Staff development that improves the learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

Family Involvement: Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

State, System, School and Individual Responsibilities

This *Professional Development Policy* recognizes that professional development is an essential ingredient in the continuous improvement of schools and is embedded within any sound improvement plan. The policy is consistent with the alignment of goals from the Tennessee *Master Plan*, the system's five-year strategic plan and the individual school improvement plan as well as federal policies.

State Responsibilities

While the emphasis for design and delivery of professional development is at the school, it is the state's responsibility to encourage and provide resources for and information about professional development. The state defines statewide goals for education through legislation and the *Master Plan*. Those goals include ambitious standards for student performance. In support of those goals, the state makes available to local school systems information on education improvement strategies supported by current research and provides opportunities for professional development and continuous growth. The state creates and supports the capacity for local professional development and encourages and supports faculty at institutions of higher education to participate in professional development in schools. The goal is to ensure that every student has a highly qualified teacher.

Specifically, the role of state leadership is to:

1. Implement a coherent statewide professional development system that targets resources, programs and personnel to identified needs of school systems and schools.
2. Identify effective educational and professional development practices and provide information about them to school personnel.
3. Ensure that state policies, rules, and regulations provide guidance and flexibility to school systems and schools in developing and carrying out professional development.

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4. Allocate adequate resources to professional development and mentoring of teachers.
5. Ensure that professional growth and development needs are identified in the needs assessment and planning processes.
6. Establish criteria for approval of school improvement plans that ensure that both professional development and mentoring of teachers relate directly to identified student needs and are consistent with professional development standards and state curriculum standards.
7. Require school systems to describe the alignment of the standards when they request funding for any program that includes professional development.
8. Create opportunities to build learning communities across the state among educators from pre-kindergarten through higher education (P-16).
9. Recommend, support and evaluate the use of technology resources for professional development to share statewide.
10. Assist school systems by providing support for the effective use of technology in the classroom.
11. Support partnerships among public schools, higher education and professional organizations in continuing professional development of the state's teachers and administrators.
12. Work with business and industry to encourage the sharing of resources, expertise, and opportunities for professional growth and development with educators.
13. Provide a conduit for teachers, principals, supervisors and superintendents to communicate their professional development needs through their respective state and local study councils.

School System Responsibilities

Primary responsibility for the design and delivery of professional development belongs to the local school system. Each system must create the capacity for ongoing professional development by providing resources and information to schools and to individual teachers and administrators. The *Master Plan*, *Teacher Education Policy*, policies for the principal and the supervisor, and the *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* all emphasize the role of local schools and school systems in professional development consistent with

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NSDC staff development standards. School systems must work with schools in planning and implementing a school-focused professional development program.

Specifically the role of the school system leadership is to:

1. Establish a climate and policies in support of professional growth and development for all professional and paraprofessional employees by adopting policies and allocating sufficient resources for professional development.
2. Engage all school leaders in planful, integrated, career-long learning to improve student learning.
3. Conduct a professional development needs assessment, support schools in establishing their specific professional development needs in relation to standards and data on student achievement, and assist schools in locating available resources to meet these needs.
4. Focus professional development to enhance educator knowledge of the subject content related to state curriculum standards, use of data and assessments to inform classroom practice, and strategies to meet the needs of English language learners and students with special needs.
5. Establish a system to regularly evaluate the impact of professional development on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student learning.
6. Provide in professional development the skills and strategies to assist educators in working effectively and collaboratively with paraprofessionals, parents and community members.
7. Consider professional development implications of any comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning.
8. Recruit and select personnel who display willingness to participate in continuous learning and willingness to invest in professional growth.
9. Develop partnerships with institutions of higher education to further the growth and development of pre-service and experienced teachers.
10. Collaborate with other school systems to maximize professional development resources.

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School Responsibilities

A school focused on student learning establishes an organizational structure and information system for implementing its own professional development plan, consistent with its goals and school improvement process. The school assesses its needs continuously and makes adjustments in its the school improvement plan. Teacher and administrator learning is an integral part of school life and time is allocated for it, preferably embedded within the school day.

Specifically, the role of the school leadership is to:

1. Assess the professional development needs in relation to standards and implement professional development needed to meet school, system, state, and federal goals.
2. Establish a process to ensure that school improvement plans include professional development plans consistent with NSDC standards and this policy.
3. Ensure that individual growth plans developed through the use of the *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* are of high quality and consistent with NSDC standards. Incorporate measures of accountability that direct attention to valued learning outcomes.
4. Provide time and resources for teachers and administrators to collaborate on common goals; observe examples of good practice both within and outside of the school and school system; and reflect on their practice.
5. Ensure that professional growth and development is continuous, ongoing, and job-embedded and includes follow-up and support for further learning.
6. Model effective learning processes; provide opportunities to reflect on new learning and to demonstrate and share knowledge.
7. Base content of professional development on analysis of actual student performance related to Tennessee curriculum standards, *Early Childhood Education Policy*, *Middle Grades Policy*, and *High School Policy*.
8. Encourage collaboration among all stakeholders; incorporate into school plans professional development opportunities offered by the school system, state, higher education, professional organizations and business.
9. Provide continuous evaluation of professional development with the results used for planning and provide feedback to schools, teachers, and providers.

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Individual Educator Responsibilities

Teachers and administrators assume responsibility for their own continuous learning and contribute their knowledge to colleagues in their school. Individual educators strive to create a professional learning community and to help create conditions that allow all stakeholders to work well together. They channel their efforts toward a clear, commonly shared purpose for student learning and toward fulfilling the goals of the school improvement plan.

Specifically, the role of the individual educator is to:

1. Access professional literature, engage colleagues, participate in professional organizations, and use technology and other resources to support their own professional growth and development.
2. Deepen content knowledge related to the state curriculum standards in the subjects they teach and seek professional development opportunities to access additional strategies to provide effective instruction to their students.
3. Reflect on their own professional practices and continually evaluate the effect their instruction has on students; use the information to modify instruction accordingly.
4. Develop individual growth plans related to school goals, their own learning needs and the learning needs of their students.
5. Assist in the development of beginning teachers.
6. Model effective learning processes for colleagues.

Role of Other Organizations

Institutions of higher education and professional organizations can play important roles by collaborating with PreK-12 educators, sharing new knowledge regarding effective practices and providing professional development for educators. Business and industry can provide new perspectives by sharing their professional development resources and experiences with educators.

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Available Resources

Professional development is a central element needed to accomplish the goals of the Education Improvement Act, the Education Reform Act, and the Master Plan. The Basic Education Program (BEP) funding formula generates funds that local school systems can use to support professional development. The Education Reform Act, if funded, would provide additional professional development. The higher education funding formula provides funds to colleges and universities that can be used to enhance professional learning. Federal programs provide significant funding for professional development activities.

State and local funds provide for five inservice days each year for educators. The state salary schedule provides additional salary increments for the completion of advanced study. State law regarding inservice and State Board of Education policy regarding teacher education direct that emphasis be given to assisting beginning teachers and administrators to help them in the first years of teaching and school leadership. The BEP funding formula provides funding for supervisory positions to be determined in accordance with local priorities; such personnel can be used to develop the capacity for locally initiated professional development.

The State Department of Education provides institutes, academies and workshops which local educators are encouraged to attend. Colleges and universities offer programs and have expertise that can help educators. Local school systems have latitude in scheduling the time within the school day to create opportunities for collaborative professional development activities.

Resources

This Professional Development Policy draws upon publications and research of the National Council for Staff Development and others. Schools and schools systems are encouraged to consult them as they develop their own professional development plans.

Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with the National Policy Board for Educational Administrators. 2000. Standards Based Professional Development for School Leaders. Washington, DC. www.ccsso.org.

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Killion, J., 2002. Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development. National Staff Development Council. Oxford, OH.

Loucks-Horsley, S., Hewson, P.W., Love, N., and Stiles, K.E. 1998. Designing Professional Development for Teachers of Science and Mathematics. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Love, N. 2002. Using Data/Getting Results: A Practical Guide for School Improvement in Mathematics and Science. Norwood, MA.

Learning First Alliance. 2000. Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide. www.learningfirst.org.

National Staff Development Council. 2001. Standards for Staff Development. Oxford, Ohio. www.nscd.org.

North Central Regional Education Laboratory. 1999. Professional Development: Learning from the Best. Oak Brook, IL. www.ncrel.org.

Planning and Evaluation Service. 1999. Designing Effective Professional Development: Lessons from the Eisenhower Program. Jesup, MD. www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html.

United States Department of Education. 2002. No Child Left Behind: Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Washington D.C.

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Appendix A
Definitions from Title IX of the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - The term professional development --

- (A) includes activities that--
- (i) improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;
 - (ii) are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;
 - (iii) give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;
 - (iv) improve classroom management skills;
 - (v)
 - (I) are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom; and
 - (II) are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
 - (vi) support the recruiting, hiring and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
 - (vii) advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are
 - (I) based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and
 - (II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
 - (viii) are aligned with and directly related to--
 - (I) State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and

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- (II) The curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (i) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B);
 - (ix) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;
 - (x) are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
 - (xi) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula core and academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
 - (xii) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
 - (xiii) provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;
 - (xiv) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
 - (xv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and
- (B) may include activities that--
- (i) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
 - (ii) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under

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part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and

provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom